

## Why keep mice and rats out of your home?

Some mice and rats can carry harmful diseases, such as Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome, leptospirosis, lymphocytic choriomeningitis and typhus. While these diseases are uncommon in Vermont, the Health Department recommends that you take precautions to reduce your chance of becoming ill. The best way to protect yourself and your family from these diseases is to keep mice and rats out of your home.

Rodent feces, urine, saliva and nesting material can be a source of infection. When cleaning up after rodents, please follow the recommended safety procedures below.

## How to clean up mouse and rat urine and droppings:

- ❖ Wear rubber or plastic gloves.
- ❖ Spray urine and droppings with a disinfectant or a mixture of bleach and water. Make sure to get the urine and droppings very wet. Let it soak for 5 minutes.
  - Use a general-purpose household disinfectant. Make sure the word "disinfectant" is written on the label.
  - OR**
  - Use bleach and water solution. Mix 1 ½ cups of household bleach with 1 gallon of water. Smaller amounts can be made with 1 part bleach and 9 parts water.
- ❖ Use a paper towel to wipe up the urine or droppings.
- ❖ Throw the paper towel in the garbage.
- ❖ Mop or sponge the area with a disinfectant or bleach solution.
- ❖ Wash gloved hands with soap and water or spray a disinfectant or bleach solution on gloves before taking them off.
- ❖ Wash hands with soap and warm water after taking off your gloves.

### ***Clean-up tip:***

Do not sweep or vacuum up mouse or rat urine, droppings or nests. This will cause virus particles to go into the air, where they can be breathed in.

## How to clean out cabins, sheds, barns or other outbuildings:

- ❖ Open all doors and windows. Leave them open for 30 minutes before cleaning.
- ❖ Wear rubber or plastic gloves.
- ❖ Spray urine and droppings with a disinfectant or a mixture of bleach and water. Make sure to get the urine and droppings very wet. Let it soak for 5 minutes.
- ❖ Clean up all rodent urine, droppings, nests or dead mice or rats by using a disinfectant or a mixture of bleach and water.
- ❖ Mop floors or spray dirt floors with a disinfectant or mixture of bleach and water.
- ❖ Clean countertops, cabinets and drawers with a disinfectant or a mixture of bleach and water.
- ❖ Steam clean, shampoo or spray upholstered furniture with a detergent, disinfectant or a mixture of bleach and water.

Wash any bedding and clothing with laundry detergent in hot water if you see any mouse or rat urine or droppings on them.

### **What you can do inside your home to discourage rodents:**

- ❖ Keep food in thick plastic or metal containers with tight lids.
- ❖ Clean up spilled food right away.
- ❖ Wash dishes and cooking utensils soon after use.
- ❖ Put pet food away after use and don't leave food and water bowls out overnight.
- ❖ Keep garbage in thick plastic or metal containers with tight lids.
- ❖ Check inside your house for gaps or holes that a pencil can fit into.
  - Fill small holes with steel wool. Put caulk around steel wool to keep it in place.
  - Use lath screen or lath metal, cement, hardware cloth or metal sheeting to fix large holes. Lath screen can be folded and pushed into holes. It can also be cut to fit around pipes. This material can be found in the masonry or building materials section at a hardware store.

### **What you can do outside your home:**

- ❖ Use a thick plastic or metal garbage can with a tight lid. Make sure there are not holes in the garbage can.
- ❖ Clean up trash, brush and weeds around your home.
- ❖ Check the outside of your house for gaps and holes. Seal them with cement, lath metal, hardware cloth or sheet metal.
- ❖ Put away pet food after use.
- ❖ Keep grains and animal feed in thick plastic or metal containers with tight lids.
- ❖ Get rid of old trucks, cars and old tires. Mice and rats may use these as homes.
- ❖ Keep grass and shrubbery near the home (within 100 feet) well-trimmed.
- ❖ Move wood piles 100 feet or more away from the house. Raise the wood at least 1 foot off of the ground.
- ❖ Use rodent traps in areas outside your home where you think mice and rats live.
- ❖ Fix gaps in trailer skirtings.
- ❖ Keep composting bins 100 feet or more from the house.

If you have a large infestation or a recurring problem, consider consulting a pest control professional for advice on how to remove existing rodents and prevent re-infestation.

For more information about cleaning up after rodents please see <http://www.cdc.gov/rodents/>